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ABSTRACT

Educational quality and the organizational structure of the nation's educational system are examined in relation to the call for reform in American public education in this symposium paper. In "Introduction and Problem Statement," Robert H. Beach states that problems in American education stem from a structurally dysfunctional system, are not isolated and specific as the literature suggests, and should be viewed and treated in a holistic fashion. Three papers were presented at the symposium. First, "The School Finance Perspective" (Ronald A. Lindahl) examines school finance in relation to philosophical, legal, governance, structural, and planning concerns in education. Second, "The Perspective from Planning and Organizational Theory" (William D. McInerney) examines the public school administrator's use of a rational comprehensive model in educational planning and describes the limited applicability of that model to educational organizations. Finally, "The Perspective That Schools Cannot Be Improved Until the Defects of Their Systemic Organizations Are Removed" (A. W. VanderMeer) focuses on intellectual development, socialization, and custodial functions in schools, and states that schools are organized in such a way as to frustrate attempts to achieve improvements in the performance of these functions. Included in the paper are 31 references. (WTH)

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SYSTEMATIC CONCERNS RELATING TO THE ADEQUACY OF EXISTING ELEMENTARY/SECONDARY ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES TO ADEQUATELY PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

A Symposium Sponsored by:

The International Society for Educational Planning (ISEP)

and

The Mid-South Educational Research Association (MSERA)

November 16, 1984
New Orleans, Louisiana

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Symposium Topic

Systematic Concerns Relating to the Adequacy of Existing Elementary/Secondary Organizational Structures to Adequately Provide Educational Excellence:

Introduction and Problem Statement:

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The University of Alabama

The School Finance Perspective:

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International Society for Educational Planning

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As never before in the history of our nation, the American public educational system is being condemned as inadequate and targeted for reform. Dozens of prestigious national commissions have been appointed to assess the prospects of our schools for providing "educational excellence." Each has examined a sampling of school situations and practices and many have attempted to present relatively concrete suggestions by which state legislatures and education agencies, local school boards, and even campus level administrators can modify existing practice to better serve the educational needs of today's society and students. Similar efforts are being undertaken in virtually every state and even at regional and local levels.

However, while little question exists regarding the rigor and quality of these studies or the critical condition of our nation's educational system, there is reason to believe that we may be concentrating our attention on symptoms of the problem rather than on underlying causes. Should this indeed be the case, a somewhat different viewpoint might provide a valid lens through which to bring into focus the true structural foundations of our current educational crisis. Operating from a fundamental conceptualization of the nation's elementary/secondary organizational structure as a living system, a counter proposal to many of these recent studies is derived from the perspective that the issues commonly identified as "the major problems in education today" are interrelated. As such, the true nature of our educational problems is multiple and systemic rather than isolated and specific. Furthermore, attempts to address these problems must also be structural and wholistic.

Applying such a systemic focus to the problems highlighted in the major studies, including areas as seemingly disparate as finance, governance, planning, professional staff, pre- and in-service programs, discipline, facilities, and school-community-family relations, the conclusion is reached that the billions spent on improving the schools have been wasted unless they are directed toward a fundamental re-thinking of the organizational structure of the schools, starting with an analysis of the functions that schools are expected to perform and proceeding to the design of a system whereby these functions are performed most effectively and efficiently.

This symposium does not purport to find solutions; rather its most ambitious intent is to foster a broadened understanding of the overall issue, reduce the idolization of past concepts and approaches, and caution against "piecemeal" solutions. Its ultimate value can be considered to be the extent to which participants begin to perceive the relevance to American education of Murphy's Sixteenth Law of Systemantics, which states: "A complex system designed from scratch never works and cannot be patched up to make it work."

SYSTEMIC CONCERNS RELATING TO THE ADEQUACY OF EXISTING ELEMENTARY/SECONDARY ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES TO ADEQUATELY PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE:

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INTRODUCTION AND FORMAT

This symposium deals with a contemporary national issue of common concern to both MSERA and the International Society for Educational Planning (ISEP). This issue centers on educational quality and the adequacy of the nation's elementary/secondary organizational structure to effectively provide excellence in schooling. Symposium participants feel strongly that problems in this area are systemic, multiple, and interrelated in nature rather than isolated and specific. Therefore, each participant will discuss issues from varying perspectives, each related to the overall topic, but each having a distinct viewpoint. The areas dealing with contemporary educational problems--educational finance, operating organizational structure, and planning and organizational theory--are central to the symposium, and an attempt will be made to integrate each into a wholistic view of the issue. The symposium format is designed to create a broader understanding of all aspects of this issue. Each participant will present area viewpoints which will be followed by an integrating discussion among the participants. The floor will be open for dialog between attendees and the panel.

Our purpose here is not to find solutions to problems. That is too much to expect. We may, however, find a different viewpoint to be a valid lens with which to bring our present educational problems into focus; this would be a major step forward.

THE PROBLEM

When moving over the educational landscape, one observes many impedimentum proposed as problems which prevent elementary/secondary education from achieving excellence. Regardless of where one turns, the "MAJOR PROBLEM" is found with typical findings being:

> College faculty are poorly trained, semi-literate (former teachers most likely), and are never around--off consulting, or attending a conference!

Teacher training programs are not demanding, or relevant--Ivory Towers.

Elementary/secondary teachers are poorly trained, semi-literate and never give homework. They let the kids run wild and never use the paddle! They let the kids run wild and try to discipline using the paddle!

Administrators are poorly trained, semi-literate (former coaches no doubt), and don't provide an eight-hour 275 day school day.

The school facilities are falling down while we build athletic fields and play sports (those coaches again).

Parents don't care, and the family no longer exists. The kids are dumb and/or doing dope while watching TV.

And, if this were not enough, the federal government shifts responsibility to the states by cutting back vital educational programs thereby allowing the states to further erode educational quality.

There is also name calling, defensiveness, and finger pointing. Note the recent article in The Chronicle of Higher Education citing Secretary of Education Terrel H. Bell.

COLLEGES' PROBLEMS WITH QUALITY

CALLED LESS SEVERE THAN THOSE OF SCHOOLS

"American higher education has the sniffles.... I think you'd have to use a much harsher analogy to describe the condition of the nation's schools" (pp 1-20)

None of this, of course, is funny. But it does illustrate the point that almost anything and everything can be seen as "THE PROBLEM". Of course, no one agrees with anyone else as to what "THE PROBLEM" is, but all agree that there is a "PROBLEM". In examining the solutions that have been proposed for "THE PROBLEM", A Nation At Risk (The Commission on Excellance in Education, 1983) offers implementation recommendations directed at the improvement of education. These suggestions range from calls for higher academic standards for teacher education programs to incentive plans. In all, the National Commission makes 38 specific proposals. As an example, the following paraphrase several of their recommendations:

Recommendation A1: English should equip graduates for... (p 25).

Recommendation B1: Grades should be indicators of achievement. (p 27)

Recommendation B2: Four-year colleges and universities... (p 27)

Recommendation C1: Students should be assigned more homework... (29)

Recommendation D2: Salaries for teachers should be increased... (p 30)

Recommendation E1: Principals and superintendents must play a critical leadership role... (p 32)

Recommendation E2: State and local officials, including school board members... (p 32)

Recommendation E3: The Federal government, in cooperation with states and localities... (p 32)

Recommendation E6: This Commission calls upon educators, parents and public officials... (p 33).

These recommendations are at the same time both general and specific. Of greater interest, however, is the observation that they are broad-based in the sense that action from many organizational levels is invoked. Is this evidence that education simply has many problems ranging over a broad spectrum of interests?

In reviewing past reports like A Nation At Risk, one comes across The Education of American Teachers (Conant, 1963). One may not agree with this work any more than one agrees with A Nation Risk but, in regard to recommendations pertinent to teaching, an interesting finding should be noted. Conant anticipated the conclusions of the Commission on Excellence by 20 years. Six of the seven Commission recommendations on teaching are directly addressed in Conant's recommendations. The seventh is discussed in the body of Conant's text.

"THE PROBLEM", then, becomes general and specific, new and long standing. As Dr. VanderMeer will note, we have, over these 20 years, or two decades, or one school generation, spent vast sums directed at educational improvement and reform (interestingly, graduates of Conant's schools have children preparing to graduate from the Commission's schools.). What has been accomplished? Little if anything, for we still seem to have problems similar to those of the past. There are still no clear solutions!

SYSTEM CHANGE

Our perspective on this situation is somewhat different than that found in the literature. We feel that no specific problem or set of problems is the root of our present educational difficulty; rather, the problems described and those like them are symptomatic of an overall systems problem. Our premise is that the system is critically ill and that the symptoms simply shift and waiver before us--an illusionary target including and covering the underlying cause of the real issue, i.e., an inherent structural dysfunction.

First, we should define "the system" as the educational totality of the country--public and private, pre-school to post-graduate, school district to the Supreme Court, board policy to the federal constitution. We include our culture and social inheritance as being integrally interwoven with this educational system. At times, the system derives strength from society; at times, the system serves to strengthen the society.

This is the system historically pegged as developing from the Old Deluder Act of a couple hundred years ago. There have been great changes in American education over these past two centuries--the master teacher has become the principal; teachers hold advanced degrees with state-given certificates; and the system better enfranchises minority groups based on handicap, race, age, and extended service both horizontally and vertically. The one-room school is gone--another triumph of our cost-effectiveness work. We now operate massive transportation fleets and food establishments.

These changes have been created by shifts in need and viewpoint over many years. That change has occurred and that some system response has also occurred, is not the fundamental issue. The issue is much deeper, or perhaps murkier. At issue is the nature of that system change.

In examining this change, a supportable argument can be developed: if the technological improvements related to environmental conditions, i.e., lighting, HAVAC, and transport are discounted, we still, with a few exceptions, instruct the overwhelming majority of our children as did the Greeks--a talking face and listening ears! The school district in any community is generally one of the largest local industries. Yet we have lay governing boards, as did the one-teacher school districts of the past. In about half the districts of the nation, the chief executive officer holds office by popular election. Some states still wrestle with issues raised by Cubberley and Mort! The major structural issues that are associated with this change have not been examined or resolved.

This is not to imply that the changes that have occurred have not been or are not beneficial or vital; they are! Certainly system structure has accommodated many of those changes which have occurred. But this accommodation has developed in an incrementalish way and not as planned change. For change to impact our systems effectively, we require, as Bill McInerney notes, not an incrementalist set of kludges loaded with afterthought but rather coherence, i.e., some overall and national effort directed at system-wide evaluation and modification. But an overall, fundamental examination of the structure of American education has not occurred. This is the very point of our symposium. Deep-reasoned structural change in education is required. Non-planned modifications, constitutional oversight, and court-imposed solutions for social change have brought us to the present.

THE SYSTEM AS "THE PROBLEM"

By observing the symptoms of dysfunction, we conclude that the present is not as it should be, but we persist in idolizing past structures and concepts refusing to consider the implications of those structures for the present and future. A classic example is local control. Ask a senior taking the SAT if local control in curriculum matters is a reality. We have, as Dr. Lindahl will demonstrate, real issues of structure which have developed from an interplay of school finance and court decision. Clearly we have an expanding federal educational policy, and as with other system changes, this policy has been imposed piecemeal by court intervention.

Education is not forced to accept present structures. Other forms for educational systems do and have existed. Change itself implies this fact. The United States has had other structures, and different forms exist now in other countries. Advocates can be found in this country for educational systems which differ from those now in place. As an example, Jefferson proposed a constitutional amendment directed at establishing a national system of public education (Peterson, 1970). Today such a proposal would be hearsay.

We presist in refusing to examine the potential for planned structural change at the most basic level. Aristotle wrote of the state's (nation) role in education (Smith, 1957): "1. Now nobody would dispute that the education of the young requires the special attention of the lawgiver. Indeed the neglect of this in states is injurious to their constitution..." (p 107). Our constitution and its silence towards education remains unexamined even while its basic rights are invoked as a rationale for unplanned educational change!

This panel, therefore, feels that the present structure of education in the United States requires examination--an

examination which does not seek solutions to symptomatic problems, but rather an examination looking for improvement within the overall structural aspects of American education. We wish to view the system as "THE PROBLEM".

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SYSTEMIC CONCERNS RELATING TO THE ADEQUACY OF EXISTING ELEMENTARY/SECONDARY ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES TO ADEQUATELY PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE: THE SCHOOL FINANCE PERSPECTIVE

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In conjunction with the symposium's overall theme of investigating systemic concerns related to the quality of elementary and secondary education in the United States, this paper addresses aspects of these concerns related specifically to school finance. As Beach mentioned in the opening segment of this symposium, all too often, education finance is perceived as a highly specialized and virtually discrete aspect of education. However, the position advanced in this paper is that financial concerns are very much intertwined with philosophical, legal, governance, structural, and planning concerns.

Philosophical Issues

As with many of our public welfare and service institutions, America's public schools represent a philosophical commitment which appears to be somewhat discordant with those major economic and philosphical tenets upon which our nation was founded - capitalism and free enterprise. Nowhere is this disharmony more apparent than in the area of school finance.

As Michaelson (1980) points out, U.S. education is a monopoly, with budgets determined more by political motivations than by market-related considerations. As such, the ability of a consumer to satisfy individual preferences or needs through increased investment/expenditure is severely restricted. In many cases, the only option available to the consumer is to relocate from one school district to another currently offering educational services more akin to those demanded by that individual. Even this rather drastic alternative has been considerably restricted through Federal intervention (e.g., desegregation mandates) or State intervention (e.g., "ex-post" equity provisions in state finance formulae). A further limitation is introduced by land development practices operating within a free market system. In districts with relatively high property values, it is unlikely that developers will construct housing which would yield as high density pupil populations

(e.g., low-rent or low-cost housing units) as in districts with relatively low property values. Thus, the consumer of limited means may find few housing alternatives within those districts with the most appealing educational systems and disparities in per-pupil expenditures between "rich" and "poor" districts continue to grow.

This leads to the question of the compatibility of those long-stated goals of our educational system - "equality of opportunity" and "equity" - with the more recent outcry for "excellence." Admittedly, great volumes have been filed with attempts to fully define those three elusive terms and court cases examining the constitutionality of school finance practices have produced an equally diverse set of interpretations.

The landmark equity case in school finance is held to be that of Serrano vs. Priest, in which a ruling was passed in favor of "fiscal neutrality," asserting that school expenditures may not be affected by the amount of available taxable wealth per pupil. This California Supreme Court judgment served as a catalyst for related judicial evaluations of school finance systems in virtually all states. However, not always was the result identical. Two years after the Serrano ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court, ruling on an appeal in the case of Rodriguez vs. San Antonio, found that (legally-speaking) Texas' purposes, as affirmed in that state's Constitution, were being served by its current system of school finance. While the personal opinion expressed by many of the Justicies was that the glaring inequities in tax effort and in expenditures-per-pupil prevalent among the more than one thousand school districts in Texas did not truly serve the public interest, no legal mandate for change was rendered.

In examining the implications of these two somewhat disparate interpretations of "equity" and "equality" on the potential for "excellence," serious doubts arise concerning current finance structures and practices. As Coons (1980) makes clear, if a state should pursue the "fiscal neutrality" doctrine, nay deviation from statewide expenditure norms would require sound justification. Such practice can be seen in many state's finance systems which recognize characteristics of student populations (e.g., per-pupil funding for compensatory education), special program costs (e.g., cost-equalization funding for special, vocation, or bi-lingual education), local cost differentials (e.g., cost-indexing), or even local willingness to invest beyond state-established levels (e.g., district power equalizing). However, such adjustments operate within a relatively limited set of parameters, with the end result being a predictably homogeneous educational program across the state.

A "poor" district within such a state would have to make such an additional tax effort to support programs of "excellence' beyond the established norms as to be virtually inconsiderable. "Rich" districts, on the other hand, would be faced with such inverse wealth adjustment practices as recapture, so that to make significant efforts to break away from state-established norms equally unpalatable to voters.

In states such as Texas, where the philosophical committment is to a minimum state educational program enhanced by local initiatives, "lighthouse" districts pursuing programs of "excellence" are much more likely to emerge. An oil-rich district such as the Goose Creek Independent School District (operating expenses of $3352 per pupil in 1983-84) can expend much more per child than property-poor districts such as the Ysleta Independent School District ($1941 per pupil), despite making a comparable tax effort (Texas Research League, 1984). However, and temporarily disregarding the seemingly transparent, yet much proferred argument that increased expenditure bears no relation to increased "excellence," one must question the prospects for "excellence" in property poor districts.

If one examines the issue on an inter-state basis, similar concerns become apparent. For example, Johns, Morphet, and Alexander (1983) found that while Illinois and Idaho might be well-matched in terms of tax effort, the per-pupil yield from a normatized Halstead representative tax system would result in 113.8 for Illinois' students, whereas Iowa would only produce at the 75.7 level (p. 165). No structures currently exist to address such interstate inequities. Consequently, if states continue to concentrate efforts to reduce intra-state inequities, inter-state inequity may become even further accentuated, if not in percentage terms, certainly in absolute dollar amounts. The implications on state potentials for "excellence" may be significant.

Associated with this issue is the philosophy of "free enterprise." As stated previously, America's public schools represent a virtual monolopy. A parent desiring to educate a child in any school other than that one public shcool corresponding to his/her exact street address faces some extremely stiff "penalities," considered by some to be restrictions to free trade. In only the rarest of circumstances (e.g., districts implementing the magnet school or voucher system concepts) does a parent have any option of educational alternatives within the public school system. Any parent electing to send a child to a private school not only must pay the tuition charged by that school, but remains liable for all tax payments to support the public schools. At the same time, many other tax-supported state mechanisms such as school accreditation, financial auditing and accountability, or even breakfast and lunch programs may be denied to such parents. In

urban areas, alternatives exist in the private sector to supplement the public school education (e.g., evening classes in advanced of highly specialized areas, private tutoring and remedial instruction, etc.), but economy of scale considerations limit even these alternatives to densely populated or reasonably affluent locales. In almost no circumstances can these options be selected as a substitution for the public school education, regardless of their quality or benefit to the student. As Gurwitz (1982) notes, the net effect is that parents enjoy only the most limited ability to determine their own optimal levels of investment in the elementary or secondary education of their children.

Constitutional Issues

The apparent discrepancy between the philosophies of the U.S. economic system and of the educational system can possibly be traced back to a fundamental Constitutional issue which has resulted in a number of systemic problems for our public educational system. The Constitution failed to mention education as a specific function of the federal government. As such, with the ratification of the Tenth Amendment, the primary responsibility for education, by default, was assigned to the states. However, as education is inextricably intertwined with the issues of national welfare and defense, both of which Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution reserved as functions and responsibilities of the federal government, the federal role in financing education has suffered from indefinition and inconsistency.

As mentioned previously, the federal government has made no effort to reduce interstate inequities in education finance. Consistent with Constitutional interpretations of the time, federal aid has been traditionally categorical in nature, nominally promoting either national welfare (e.g., school breakfast and lunch programs) or defense (e.g., vocational programs or expanded math and science curricula). Even recent efforts to reduce bureaucratic guidelines and permit greater local determination of priorities through shifting to block grant structures preserves this basic categorical intent.

However, the question continues to arise as to whether or not national welfare is truly served by the current state/local governance system of public education. In light of the mobility of our current society, one must question to what extent it serves national welfare to have major urban areas pay for the eduational failures of other districts and states when mases of inadequately prepared dropouts (or worse yet, inadequately prepared graduates)must apply for unemployment and welfare assistance once they discover that they are not sufficiently educated to enter the productive labor force. The migration of high-technology industries to specific regions (e.g., the "sun

belt", "Silicon Valley", etc.) greatly boosts the local economies of these regions. However, with current national recruiting practices, the high costs of educating the highly educated specialists needed by these industries is often borne by other states.

As VanderMeer pointed out in his segment of this symposium, national welfare is a global concept which encompasses far more than purely academic achievement. In examining school finance formulae at both the national and state levels, considerable support is lent to this argument concerning the inadequacy of our system to meet socialization or custodial needs of our children. The highly categorical nature of existing allocation formulae virtually excludes all but the richest local districts from providing such services.

There is little argument that the welfare of the nation is highly related to the overall level of education of its voting, consuming populace. However, the federal government's limited (and diminishing) proportion of participation in the financing of public education, its lack of efficient liaison with state and local units, and the restricted scope of its categorical programs tend to eny this apparent truth.

Governance Issues

As Kirst and Garms (1980) define, school governance in the 1980's is a clear case of "everybody and nobody in charge" (p.70). The entire structure of education is predicated upon maximum control at local levels (e.g., independent school districts governed by local Boards of Education), with gradually diminishing governance through regional, state, and federal levels. However, with the trend toward fiscal neutrality as a predominant goal of state finance systems, federal intervention through mandated programs (e.g., bi-lingual and special education, desgregation plans, etc.), and the overall need for higher levels of funding, local funds have gradually come to play a lesser role in the overall financing of public education. State mandates regarding such issues as building space per student, maximum class sizes, state minimum salary scales, and state-mandated curricula generally result in fairly rigid parameters within which all but the exceptionally rich districts find themelves forced to allocate their limited funds. It is no wonder that most districts find that little discretionary power actually exists in the budgetary process.

At the same time, as Kirst and Garms (1980) point out, "the local superintendent and administrative staff are now a reactive force trying to juggle diverse and changing coalitions across different issues and levels of government" (pp.70-71). Fixed costs, vocal public interest groups, teacher organizations, and various levels of government cmbine to reduce to less than 10%

the proportion of the budget which local Boards effectively control.

If one considers the personnel involved in the financial leadershop of most school districts, however, some argument can be made that this limited discretion is desirable. Only in the rarest of cases are school principals, central office administrators, or superintendents well trained in both education and finance. While school districts are very often the largest financial enterprise in any community, it is the exception rather than the rule to find employees with advanced degrees in finance or even in business administration. Huge cash flows are typical of schools, yet their investment procedures are often so rudimentary as to represent an almost criminal ignorance of potential revenues. In those cases in which school districts have opted for leadership from the business field, all too often the unfamiliarity and insensitivity of these managers to the unique characteristics and needs of educational institutions has resulted in other types of conflicts and inefficiencies. As Beach discussed earlier in this symposium, the need for higher and more comprehensive credentials for selecting our schools' administrators is obvious.

Any desire to effect a more significant change in the educational programs through increased financial support typically calls for a public referendum, a highly politicized process which bears little resemblance to its origins in "town-hall meetings." With changing demographics, such public decisions will more and more often be made by generations of voters not currently benefitting from the educational system or by vocal minorities whose votes can be marshalled in disproportionate numbers. In urban areas, the competing demands of a proliferation of public agencies creates an overload situation in which education referenda cannot hope for optimal support.

Within the upper levels of the governance structure exist similar systemic problems related to school finance. The U.S. Supreme Court mandates that illegal aliens not be denied an education, yet funding to meet the unique educational needs of this population has been slow in forthcoming. Recent interpretations of the schools' responsibility to the physically handicapped involved considerable expense; however, local districts find themselves left with the question of how to support needed modifications in facilities, programs, and services. At the state level, similar inconsistencies are prevalent. For example, the 1984 Texas Legislature passed two far-reaching educational reform bills. Among the provisions of "House Bill 72" and "Chapter 75" are such modifications as mandated class sizes of no more than 22 pupils per class in the primary grades, computer literacy courses for all students at both the junior and senior high school levels, and the

implementation of "career ladders" for teachers. While the politically-expedient issue of "career ladders" received partial funding, local Boards were left with the problem of figuring out how to fund the other mandated reforms. All too often, standards and programs are legislated without due consideration to their financial impact, with the net result being that current governance structures and practices appear inadequate to pursue "excellence." Indeed, even the goal of "maintenance" may become a lofty aspiration for many of our schools if such problems are not adequately resolved.

Planning Issues

In considering financial problems which may have their roots in the planning processes commonly employed in American public schools, the most immediately apparent seems to be the overall questions of efficiency. As Michaelson (1980) notes:

> When ends are ambiguous and means uncertain, the empirical meaning of efficiency becomes problematic. Under such circumstances, standard economic analysis alone cannot maintain efficiency as a criterion for assessing efficacy of organizational conduct (p. 209).

As McInerny discussed earlier in the symposium, the bureaucracy of our public schools is no exception to this.

Garms, Guthrie, and Pierce (1978) make a strong case for the concept that the conditions of equality, efficiency, and liberty are "inconsistent and antithetical" (p. 18). Furthermore, they assert that "education is one of the prime instruments through which society attempts to promote all three values" (p. 19). In part, they attribute this to a lack of agreement upon goals or desired product. When coupled with the aforediscussed lack of education, there is little doubt regarding the veracity of their conclusion that "efforts to apply purely economic methods and techniques of efficiency to public schools are relatively useless" (p. 29). Even if one adopts their re-definition of efficiency as "maximum consumer satisfaction at minimum cost," (p. 29) few could consider our current planning processes as contributors to efficiency.

Consistent with McInery's indictment of the planning process in our public school systems, these authors trace the roots of the problem back to the federal level, asserting that:

> At the federal level there is almost no systematic educational planning. The Federal government reacts to crises.... State legislatures do, of course, enact laws and insure regulations affecting school districts, but they do not normally develop comprehensive education plans to guide allocation of state resources or development of program

> criteria. What little ad hoc educational planning exists is totally unrelated to other areas of social policy.... A few larger school districts have offices of planning and attempt to forecast needs and develop programs to meet them. Most districts, however, operate on a year-to-year basis.... What has occurred in the past largely determines the trend of future offerings (p. 82).

It is essential to note that this indictment of the current status of educational planning transcends all levels of governance. The Constitutional indefinitions regarding the role of the federal government discussed earlier and many states' commitments to local control over the public school system may partially explain deficiencies at those levels. However, perhaps the most significant condemnation offered above is the failure of local districts to plan rationally and to condsider efficiency issues in their decision making. Consider the issue of consolidating or decentralizing school districts. As garms, Guthrie, and Pierce summarize the research on the most efficient size for school districts, "there are significant economies of scale up to about 1500 to 2000 students in a district and significant diseconomies of scale when districts are comprised of more than 30,000 students" (p. 94). Such considerations of efficiency, however, are seldom significant factors in the highly politicized decisions of school boards examining such a posiblity. Preservatin of local "identity," tradition, or even less honorable concerns as maintenance of roles by school board members or administrators may often outweigh financial or programmatic advantages.

Further support for this position can be found if one considers that most budget planning at the local district level is done through incremental practices. While such alternative approaches as "zero-base" or "PPBES" may offer greater accountability or control, the most typical budgetary approach adopted by local school districts begins with consideration of how much money was allocated to each expenditure category the previous year, adjusts this by inflationary and growth/decline factors, and then considers any requests for unusual expenditures or capital outlay needs.

Clearly, the available technology far transcends such practices. For example, mandated accounting procedures in Texas are such that school districts could analyze their expenditures with sufficient accuracy to identify individual programs, campuses, or even specific functions (e.g., administration, instruction, etc.). As school distric wihhave not computerized all such financial systems are virtually non-existent, this information is readily available to administrators and boards during budget planning. The fact remains, however, that despite its availablity, little attempt is made to employ the data in the financial planning process.

Conclusions

As stated at the onset of this paper, the problems our schools face in the area of education finance are not purely economic in nature. Throughout the wide variety of issues cited on the preceeding pages, one theme remains constant - the major financial issues are inextricably linked to other interdependent aspects of our public school system. Any attempts to address financial problems independently of these overriding systemic concerns cannot hope to succeed. Indeed, continued focusing of attention and energy on atomistic financial controversies may distract us from the greater issues and eliminate any possibility we might have of ever attaining a true level of "excellence" in our schools.

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SYSTEMIC CONCERNS RELATING TO THE ADEQUACY OF EXISTING ELEMENTARY/SECONDARY ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES TO PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE: THE PERSPECTIVE FROM PLANNING AND ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY.

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It is a common human trait to attempt to make our problems fit our tools. The responses of school people across this nation to the criticisms of education handed down by various commissions illustrate this trait in action: "What we've been doing hasn't worked satisfactorily; so let's do more of it harder." Thus, 48 of the 51 state jurisdictions (including the District of Columbia) are considering increasing high school graduation requirements; 42 are considering or have adopted competency testing for students; 38 are considering or have adopted a longer school day; 21 are considering or have adopted a longer school year; and 18 are considering or adopted policies curtailing student participation in extracurricular/sports activities (U.S. Department of Education, 1984).

This paper does not argue the merits of any or all of these approaches to improving education. The point here being made is that people tend to react to stimuli by selecting from a repertory of action programs which they have built up over the years. This is the case with educational planning, which historically has meant comprehensive rational planning. Educational administrators have as a group been trained within this narrow view of planning. Most administrator who self-consciously practice educational planning believe themselves to be practicing comprehensive rational planning. The applicability of this paradigm to educational organizations is limited, however. Failure to recognize and adjust for these limitations will severely handicap the responsiveness of school districts attempting to cope with opportunities and challenges arising in the environment in which they operate.

Allison (1969) has delineated the rational choice model. In this approach to organizational choice the organization is perceived as a unitary actor attempting to maximize strategic goals and objectives. Various courses of action to achieve stated goals and objectives are proposed. Each alternative is evaluated relative to its projected consequences, which may be understood as benefits and costs measured in terms of the goals and objectives. The choice of an alternative is value-

maximizing. That alternative with the preferred set of consequences is selected.

Even a cursory survey of texts and resource materials utilized in the training of educational administrators reveals the dominance of the comprehensive rational planning paradigm. Morphet, Johns, and Reller (1974) called for a planning process consisting of needs assessment, goals formulation, the design and testing of action alternatives, and the adoption and implementation of the alternative most likely to achieve the conditions desired. Kimbrough and Nunnery (1976) presented a similar process, adding a feedback step in monitoring the implementation of the plan. Formulating board goals, stating the goals in performance objectives, testing alternative ways of achieving the goals, and implementing the alternative with the highest return for resources expended are the steps in the model promoted by Jacobson, Logsdon, and Wiegman (1973) and Campbell, Cunningham, Nystrand, and Usdan (1980).

Similarly, Sergiovanni, Burlingame, Coombs, and Thurston (1980, p. 339) have characterized planning as a purposive and rational-striving process." Knezevich (1984, p. 88) recognized as planning those activities that would satisfy the following conditions: "(1) future-oriented, (2) goal-oriented, (3) based on rational and verifiable procedures and data, and (4) related to performance enhancement and goal achievement by optimal means." A similar set of conditions characterizing planning was posed by Orlosky, McCleary, Shapiro, and Webb (1984).

Resource materials in the training of educational administrators have no less approached planning and decision making as value-maximizing activities. Two examples will suffice. Wynn and Guditus (1984, p. 100), writing primarily with respect to participatory management techniques, characterized the process of decision making in the classic rational model:

1. Recognition of the problem
2. Collection of information
3. Definition and diagnosis of the problem
4. Establishment of criteria of acceptable solution
5. Identification of options
6. Evaluation of options
7. Selection of preferred solution
8. Implementation of solution
9. Evaluation of solution

A similar planning model was presented by the American Association of School Administrators (1983, pp. 10-11). The model breaks down into seven stages. Stage one, getting started, involves assembling a planning team. Stage two, gathering information, involves data collection. Stage three, identifying priority needs, involves setting priorities among the needs

uncovered in stage two. Stage four, defining program requirements, involves specifying the time, staff, financial, and other needs of each designed priority. Stage five, exploring options, involves combining the needs or programs defined in stage four into a single plan. Stage six, refining the plan, involves seeking expert input into such areas as budget, legal, governance, and administrative aspects of the plan. Stage seven, follow through, involves communicating, evaluating, reviewing, and revising the plan to meet changing needs. While serious objections may be raised to a planning model that defers needs assesment to the third step, the model is clearly an attempt to prescribe a rational decision model within a relatively comprehensive process. Planning, as it is presented to educational administrators, is largely based on the comprehensive rational planning paradigm.

A study currently underway of planning practice in public school systems (McInerney, 1984) supports the contention that school administrators consider themelves comprehensive rationalist planner. Respondents were asked to rate each of a list of planning activities as an activity they would (1) always or usually perform, (2) sometimes perform, or (3) seldom or never perform in planning. The planning process which a majority of the respondent districts reported they "always or usually" employ are: (1) conduct a needs assessment relative to the overall mission of the district; (2) conduct a needs assessment relative to a specific problem; (3) formulate a written statement of goals; (4) determine resources available; (5) construct a budget for the project or program; and (6) adjust goals in light of resources available.

That school system-based practitioners have been trained in and tend to employ the rational comprehensive planning model is not in and of itself a bad thing. As Davis (1983) has pointed out, the rational paradigm is the logical place to begin. You can't explore the numerous variations on the theme unless you are familiar with the theme itself. The danger with the comprehensive rational paradigm, however, is that administrators may attempt to employ it in situations for which it is unsuitable. Hudson (1983) has remarked the tendency of planners to rely on the comprehensive rational paradigm exclusively. Simply nodding recognition at the limitations of the model and then proceeding with it does not ameliorate the shortsightedness inherent in limiting the planning repertory to any single theory or style of planning.

A first criticism of the comprehensive rational model lies in the demands the model makes on human intelligence and resourcefulness. Since the rational model presents a comprehensive planning agenda, it assumes a complete knowledge of the consequences of any given alternative and the ability to select from all possible action alternatives. March and Simon

(1959) specified the choice environment of the rational decision maker to include the whole set of possible action alternatives, the set of possible consequences for each alternative, and a "utility function" or "preference-ordering" that allows all consequences to be ranked as to desirability (p. 137). Simon (1955) had previously noted that there are in fact limits to the rationality that the decision maker can achieve.

> The individual is limited by his unconscious skills, habits, and reflexes; he is limited by his values and conceptions of purpose, which may diverge from the organization goals; he is limited by the extent of his knowledge and information (p. 241).

Simplification mechanisms were offered to reduce the theoretical complexity of the rational/comprehensive paradigm. Simon's (1955) bounded rationality suggested replacing seeking the optimal solution with choosing between satisfactory and unsatisfactory and placing emphasis on feasibility as a key selection criterion. Lindblom (1959) proposed the model which came to be known as disjointed incrementalism. Lindblom argued that decision makers and planners lack the time, inclination, and ability to consider the universe of alternatives that comprehensive rationality demands. Rather decisions and plans are formulated against a backdrop of current and past decisions and plans, and differ only marginally from past practice. Values in the organization are relatively stable, having been hammered out over a considerable period of time, and form the starting place for considerations of values implicit in subsequent decisions and actions. Unlike the assumption of comprehensive rationality that each decision situation weighs values and choices against the universe of values and choices, Lindblom argued that the planner/decision maker comes to his moment of choice with few viable options available. Rejecting the efficacy of means-ends analysis as a test of decision, due to the impossiblity of perfect anticipation of the consequences of alternatives, Lindblom decreed the test of a good plan of action to be its ability to earn agreement by the various stakeholders in the decision.

If the rational comprehensive model places unreasonable demands on individuals within the organization, a further source of the limitations of the comprehensive rational planning paradigm as an appropriate model for educational planning may be found in the set of assumptions about the nature of complex organizations which underlies the theory. Schmidtlein (1983) has characterized the assumptions regarding the environmental context in which the comprehensive rational planning paradigm is appropriate. The first assumption which must be met is fundamental agreement in goals and priorities. Rational planning focuses on means to ends, but is weak in dealing with disagreements about values and self-interest which may arise with

respect to those means and ends. Second, rational planning assumes that the input-output parameters of planning subject matters are sufficiently enveloped so that the technology for effecting change is unambiguous. Only in this condition may significant evaluation of action alternatives be carried out. Third, since rational planning involves value-maximizing choice among action alternatives, informational, human, and financial resouces must be available so that values can be assigned to projected courses of action and attendant consequences. Fourth, there must be time available in which analysis can take place, free from deadlines and competing priorities. Finally, whatever solution is adopted must be not only technically superior, but must also be personally, organizationally, and politically acceptable to the major actors in the organization, or the plan has no chance of a successful implementation.

Organizational theorists have of late advanced numerous objections to the concept that educational organizations may be considered to be, as Clark (1981, p. 43) has put it, "... goal-driven, rational systems in which operations can and should be programmed, sequenced, monitored, and evaluated in short- and long-range planning cycles." While educational organizations do manifest "conventional bureaucratic forms of organization with standard ideas of authority, administration, and control" (March, 1978, p. 223), these forms are observed more in organizational charts than in practice. Weick (1976) has found that people in educational organizations are hard pressed to feel that rationalistic activities such a cost-benefit analysis, division of labor, specified areas of discretion, authority vested in the office, job descriptions, and a consistent evaluation and reward system either appear in the organization at all or explain much of what goes on.

The "loose coupling" that Weick (1976, p. 3) noted to be the salient organizational characteristic of educational organizations as organized anarchies characterized by problematic preferences, unclear technology, and fluid participation. Their famous model of the decision process in such organizations is the "garbage can into which various kinds of problems and solutions are dumped by participants as they are generated" (p. 2). The implications of these properties are profound for traditional theories of management, which assume well-defined goals, a clear technology, and substantial control and coordination mechanisms. The view of educational organizations as organized anarchies led Cohen, March, and Olsen (1972) to describe such an organization as

> a collection of choices looking for problems, issues and feelings looking for decisions situtions in which they might be aired, solutions looking for issues to which they might be the answer, and decision makers looking for work (p. 2).

The Perspective that Schools Cannot Be Improved Until the Defects of Their Systemic Organizations Are Removed

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The functions of the schools can be subsumed under three headings: intellectual development, socialization, and custodial. In several ways these are overlapping categories and there is an interaction between them; however, for the purpose of this paper I will generally treat them separately. The thesis of this paper is that schools are systemically organized in such a way as to frustrate all attempts to achieve significant improvements in the performance of these functions.

Intellectual Development

In today's education system the lion's share of resources for operating and improving the schools is devoted to the intellectual development function; yet it would be difficult to imagine a kind of organizational structure more maladapted to the function of developing the intellects of all of the children of all of the people. At the most basic level, that is in the curriculum, no distinction is systematically made between those knowledges and skills that must be learned and those that are only recommended as being worthwhile. Society, working through its political processes, has the right and perhaps the obligation to identify and require the learning of those knowledges and skills that must be learned in order to function at a minimal level in the world. However, additional worthwhile learnings cannot be required in a just, democratic society. It is, of course, to the advantage of the state to provide facilities whereby people can learn additional worthwhile knowledges and skills, and to encourage people to use these facilities, but whether to use or not use them must remain with the individual student and his/her parents. This principle is of basic relevance in the conduct of teaching and learning. It is a matter of coercion on the one hand and persuasion and individual interest on the other. It is also a matter of who is authorized to apply coercion if it must be applied. As the schools are organized at present, the classroom teacher, backed up by the administrative hierarchy, makes the decisions as to what, when, and to whom both persuasion and coercive acts are applied in regard to both "required" and "recommended" learning. There is no way that individual parents can effectively influence which of the "recommended learnings" the pupil will or will not pursue. Even if school officials wanted such parental input, the existing organizational structure makes it unfeasible.

Learning is an individual matter. Students learn in different ways and at different rates. In addressing a particular learning task most students start at different points,

would prefer to utilize learning resources and styles of their own preference in the completion of the task, and would take different amounts of time to finish the task. The typical instructional unit in the schools the classroom of thirty students presided over by one teacher - cannot possibly react appropriately to this fact. There are not, and cannot economically be, enough materials in every classroom to satisfy the range of differences in learning styles of 25-30 pupils. The teacher would probably not know either the materials or the students needs in sufficient detail to make optimally effective prescriptions of materials to individual students.

Because it is virtually impossible to devise a satisfactory instructional setting for individual learning in the classroom, most teachers require students to spend much time in group teaching activities. For the majority of students this means learning at the wrong pace and/or being subjected to learning resources and styles that are not his/her preferred ones. Students who learn quickly get bored and frustrated. Those who learn more slowly get confused and frustrated. Even when there is some individualization as in "supervised study" those who learn fast have to find ways to "kill time" when they are finished, and others are hard pressed to finish on time. The teacher's usual response to the fast learner is to prescribe more of the same, which is fine only if he likes it.

More defects of the present organization of schools could be exposed, but the above are sufficient to justify the conclusion that a different organization must be found if students are to develop intellectually to anything resembling their capacity and if negative attitudes toward schools and learning are to be minimized. The proportion of time any individual spends on learning is scandalously low and the frustration level is horrendously high. And this frustration produces situations where more of the teacher's time is spent keeping order than in promoting learning. Frustration also creates antagonism toward the school in all its functions, and results in apathy, mindless conformity, and anti-social behavior.

Socialization

This function is supposed to develop individual responsibility, interpersonal skills, and a reasonable variety of interests. In short, it is the development of the abilities necessary to function effectively as an individual and as a member of groups composed of various number of people working on various projects and goals. To some extent this function is performed in classrooms where the focus is on intellectual development, and, as pointed out above, the ambiance of the classroom is likely to be conducive to nothing much better than apathy and conformity. Such efforts toward socialization as there are beyond this is found in the extracurriculum to which

most students devote very little time for the obvious reason that the school organization provides very limited time and resources for the extracurriculum. Professionals are not often hired to serve the socialization function; teachers without much if any training are used on a "part of load" or extra compensation basis. Studios, libraries, sports facilities, etc. are inadequate to accomodate the numbers of students that ought to be engaged in "socialization" activities.

Two elements of the socialization process are especially worthy of note. First, many aspects of the socialization function require the existence of groups whereas intellectual development function requires individualization. Therefore the scheduling of intellectual activities can more readily be at the convenience of the student than can socialization activities. Secondly, the socialization function is less activity specific than is the intellectual development function. The student can learn mathematical skills only by studying mathematics but he/she can learn interpersonal relations skills by engaging in a wide variety of activities. The present organization of the schools is diametrically opposed to the first element and has largely neglected the second.

Custodial Function

This function is simply the provision of a safe, pleasant place for students to be for a certain number of days in the year. Contrary to the pejorative nature of the word "custodial," there should be no legal obligation for students to do anything in school other than to complete the required intellectual skill development. Of course the school must provide facilities for non-required intellectual development and for socialization, and should encourage students to make use of these facilities. However if the student declines to engage in such non-required activities and his/her parents concur, he/she still should have a safe, pleasant place to do whatever he wants to do so long as it is not inimical to the discharge of the custodial function. As organized at present, virtually no provision is made for the custodial functions; in fact, it is often not only ignored or denied but actively discouraged by the rules governing the utilization of space in the school.

Summary

Schools are systemically organized so as to prevent the most effective performance of the intellectual development function. Furthermore their organization includes elements that are counter-productive to the discharge of the socialization and custodian functions.

Weick, in characterizing educational organizations as loosely coupled, did not intend to suggest that the components of educational systems had no responsivenes to each other, but that they maintained physical and/or logic separateness even as they shared identity as sub-units of a larger system. Hoy (1982) has characterized these conflicting perspectives of educational organizations. In the rational perspective educational organizations may be seen to exhibit hierarchical structure, informal organization, decision-making structure, rules and regulations, division of labor, and line and staff; but from the social organizational perspective they are characterized by ambiguous goals, unclear technologies, uncoordinated activities, and loosely connected structural elements. The implications of these properties are profound for traditional theories of management, which assume well-defined goals, a clear technology, and substantial control and coordination mechanisms.

If the educational organization is to be understood from the classic bureaucratic perspective, then planning will be characterized as a rational activity proceeding from overall organizational goals to more specific objectives for the sub-units of the organization, each of which, as Mahoney (1983) has noted, will be limited to planning activities and decisions consistent with the overall plan of the organization. In the anarchy, however, collective goals and decisions are relatively rare. Interdependence is minmized, as individuals work in settings where they are free to make many of the decisions of how and under what conditions the work is to be done (Firestone and Herriott, 1982). Thus the formal authority relationships and chain of command of the bureaucracy is not what holds educational organizations together, but rather confidence in the licensing and certification processes that have qualified teachers (and for that matter administrators) to hold their jobs in the first place. If the organization is to be understood from this social perspective, then the view of planning as a rational comprehensive activity, centralized and hierarchical, must give way to a social theory of planning.

An example of such a model is the adaptive/goal free planning paradigm, which places emphasis on developing consensus around a shared vision of the future rather than pressing for an operational definition of program goals. Acoff (1970) noted that the principal value of planning under such a paradigm lies not so much in the plans themselves as in the process which produced them. Carroll, Clark, Huff, and Lotto (1980) have characterized this social view of planning in two ways. First, planning may be understood as a political process in which organizational takeholders negotiate preferences. Second, planning may be understood as a sense-making process in which stake-holders define their places and roles within the organization. Planning in the adaptive/goal-free mode may be understood not so much as a methodology as a mindset, a way of thinking about planning.

Planning becomes a way of sensemaking and organizing. This leads to the assumption that the organizationally designated planner will see his/her role in a modified format. As that individual begins to see the planning process as political and sense making, the tendency to specify the outputs of planning in advance through centralized intervention and management will lessen. Thus formal organizational processes will be informed and guided by the outputs of informal social organizational interactions. In the organization viewed from the social perspective, planning will exhibit procedural goals which emphasize developing consensus around a shared vision of the future; planning targets of a procedural, qualitative nature, rather than substantive and quantitative; process oriented implementation and evaluation; and decentralized responsiblity for planning.

Educational planning is a peculiar beast, compounded of planning practices and methodologies borrowed from urban studies, business, and the military. The search for planning methods which can accommodate those factors uniquely associated with the total environment of education is not likely to be brief or simple. That search will be expedited by studies which test planning theory against the realities of planning practice in school systems, thus offering both a clearer understanding of what constitutes a descriptive conceptural framework of educational planning and of planning approaches which can be effective in the field--that is, both a description of the domain and a vector along which to move.

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